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SINGING FIRES  
OF ERIN

*By*

ELEANOR ROGERS COX



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SINGING FIRES OF ERIN







From "Celtic Romances"

SABA COMES TO FINN



# SIN SIN'S FIRES OF ERIN

By ELEANOR ROGERS COX  
DESIGNS BY JOHN P. CAMPBELL



New York · JOHN LANE COMPANY · MCMXVI

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Press of  
J. J. Little & Ives Company  
New York, U. S. A.

APR 13 1916

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no. 1.

TO  
ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

THESE SONGS OF HEROIC IRELAND, WRITTEN IN  
THE UNITED STATES, ARE DEDICATED, IN  
MEMORY OF HIS LONG, DEVOTED AND  
HONORABLE SONG-SERVICE TO  
THAT DEAR MOTHERLAND

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I

SINGING FIRES





## Singing Fire

(SABA COMES TO FINN)

IN beauty clad as in a singing fire,  
And soft as stars that down the twilight  
creep,  
So from the greenwood in the day's rose-  
dawning,  
She came to Finn across the fields of  
Sleep.

Athwart the gates of Sleep she shone upon  
him,  
And in his soul awoke young April  
streams  
Of Hope, of Joy, of poet-love supernal,  
And filled with singing fire were all his  
dreams.

And waking with the morn's first argent  
gleaming,  
To faery harpings in the grass and air,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The woodland maid predestined for his  
    mating,  
Earth's virgin flower she stood before  
    him there.

Within her eyes the calm of sylvan spaces  
    By any wind of mortal life unstirred,  
And silver cadences of elfin laughter  
    Under the moon in forest-places heard.

And all around them rose a flame of sing-  
    ing,  
Wherein all breathing Nature bore its  
    part,  
As, with high vows of knightly faith un-  
    swerving,  
Finn drew the dream-seen Saba to his  
    heart.

So, from the light of deathless love en-  
    kindled  
In their bright spirits on that gracious  
    morn,  
A star to shine on Eire's way forever,  
The singing fire of Ossian's song was  
    born.

## Deirdre to Her Women

Now Night, a purple wizard, down the  
hills

Walks, and the shadows with strange whis-  
pers fills,

And broken laughter-drifts, and . . . a  
little tune

Naoise and I sang often to the Moon;  
A song of two who once upon a night  
Had fled and wed in a High King's  
despite,

And seaward laughing from his anger ran  
Down cloudy ways untrod of god or man;  
And so took ship . . . but wherefore tell  
again

A story time-dried on the lips of men:  
Time-dried, time-cried, for to earth's ut-  
most years,

Lovers; I think, shall speak this thing with  
tears;

And harpers chaunt to chords of cadenced  
pain,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

How Deirdre widowed was, and Naoise  
slain;  
Their glance enfettered by that thrice-filled  
grave,  
And the pale Queen who loved, but might  
not save. . . .

But not thus shall you speak it—you who  
know  
With what unquelled soul in high ways I  
go;  
Bringing unto the state of Ulster's king  
Such pride as it is meet his Queen should  
bring;  
Such pride as one may know who from  
Life's heart  
Seized with sure hands its one unfailing  
part;  
Holding it yet, yea, even through this  
Night,  
This dearth of all desire and all delight,  
Undimmed as on that hour it first became  
Life of her own life, flame of her soul's  
flame.

## DEIRDRE TO HER WOMEN

But say it over and over again—like this:  
In slow-paced words, such as befit the  
tongue  
Of mortals gauging an immortal bliss:  
“For seven full years, strong, beautiful  
and young,  
These twain dwelt in a wood beyond the  
seas,  
Knew the wild fellowship of sun and  
breeze,  
With lips untired each morning quaffed  
Life’s cup,  
That laughter, song and loveliness  
brimmed up;  
And counting, level-eyed, their rapture’s  
cost,  
Cried ever, ‘Well for this is all else lost!  
Yea, well for this that yet upon a morn  
Whereof the gods know, Death the mate  
twin-born,  
The bane, the flower, the crowning of our  
love,  
Shall smite out utterly the light thereof;  
Shall smite the cup alike from hand and  
mouth

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

While yet the clasp is strong, unquencht  
the drouth,  
Shall make of this, our Love's bright-  
blossomed prime,  
Only a wailing on the lips of Time.' "

Yea, had this life lasted but seven days,  
Yet were it matter for wonder and great  
praise:  
For well you know how Love's red cheek  
grows pale  
Oft in a week, and honey-cloyed and stale,  
Ere ever yet a new moon take the place  
Of that which smiled upon its infant face.  
And if, as presently, perchance I chose  
The bonds of this too-shining state to  
loose;  
If, from this splendid void and nothing-  
ness,  
Your twilight faces, Conchubar's caress,  
I step with foot and spirit unafraid  
Into that other Void where Naoise's shade  
Wanders, awaiting mine, be yours this  
pride  
To tell how well it was we loved and died:

## DEIRDRE TO HER WOMEN

Adding this word to make your tale complete,

“Where great Love is, Death is not, nor  
Defeat.”

## Finovar Dead

DOWN the dark ways, down the dim ways,  
down the ways unknown,  
Finovar, beloved of princes, lo, she goes  
alone!

She whose face a rose of flame shone  
where the sword-blades crossed,  
She whose love a windy flame led where  
Death's whirlpools tossed;  
She the wine of whose bright beauty  
dashed from waiting lips,  
Earth for thought of that it loses bows in  
awed eclipse.

Poppies, poppies, scarlet poppies for her  
brow and breast—  
Shall not Death himself come kneeling to  
receive this guest?  
Down the wraith-pale line of heroes what  
red joy shall run,  
As among them yet ensanguined of the  
wind and sun,



## FINOVAR DEAD

Flower-crowned, gold-crowned, fair past  
any eyes of men have known,  
Shines their lady's face upon them as of  
old it shone.

What mad poet raised that chaunting?  
Bid him thitherwards—

Mark how still to-day the princess goes  
among her lords;

Still as Ferdia on that morning when upon  
their shields

Backward here his warriors bore him  
through the sleeping fields;

Still as crimson plains of battle in a win-  
ter's dawn,

Beacon-fires turned pallid ashes, warring  
armies gone.

All the beauty of the world is less for that  
she takes

With her where no blast of morning  
Night's dim empire shakes;

In far Brugh love's eye seeks Ængus  
through a clouding rain,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Twilight-pale the incensed fires on his  
altars wane :

And a wind of Danaan laughter flies along  
the swords,

Where the silent hosts of Erin camp be-  
side the fords.

## Gods and Heroes of the Gael

FORTH in shining phalanx marching from  
the shrouding mists of time,  
Bright the sunlight on their foreheads,  
bright upon their golden mail,  
Lord of beauty, lords of valor, lords of  
Earth's unconquered prime,  
Come the gods, the kings, the heroes of  
the Gael.

Lugh, the splendor of whose shining lit  
the forest and the fen,  
He whose smile at first illuming all the  
shadow-haunted space  
Of the vast, primeval ranges, death-  
engirdled, shunned of men,  
Over virgin seas to Erin led our race.

Mananaan, great lord of Ocean — he  
whose fair domain outspread  
Wheresoever tides foam-flowered to the  
moon's high mandate move,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Ængus, clothed in youth immortal, on im-  
mortal ardors fed,  
Who of old in golden Brugh reigned  
lord of Love.

And his name a knightly pennon on the  
ramparts of the world,  
And his fame a fire unfailing on Time's  
utmost purple height,  
Erin's peerless gage of courage to the  
vaunting ages hurled—  
Sunward evermore Cuchulain holds his  
flight.

They are coming with the silver speech of  
Erin on their lips;  
The speech that once of all the mighty  
Celtic race made kin,  
They are coming with the laughter that  
has known no age-eclipse,  
They are coming with the songs beloved  
of Finn.

Yea, with gifts regenerating to all men of  
women born—

## GODS AND HEROES OF GAEL

Flame of courage that shall fade not,  
    flame of truth that shall not fail,  
To the music of a thousand harps they're  
    marching through the Morn,  
Deathless gods and kings and heroes of  
    the Gael!

## A Greek Lover of Queen Maeve

How shall my song reach to her where  
afar,

She walks by streams unlit of sun or star;  
Walks dreamingly, as one who in a glass  
Beholds the wraiths of perished lovers  
pass:

Smiling to each pale face with lips that  
saith,

"How fares it, love, in the dim fields of  
Death?"

For just with such a smile—earth's last  
delight—

Glanced she adown the torchlit hall that  
night;

Herself a white rose 'mid a hedge of  
spears,

Set far past range of mortal hopes or  
fears:

So steel-bright 'mid its steel engirdlement,  
Shone that white, moveless face upon me  
bent.

## A LOVER OF QUEEN MAEVE

White face—whose fame on scented sea-  
winds sped,  
Me thitherwards to that far land had led,  
From templed groves where sage and stu-  
dent walked,  
And storied ways where moonlight lovers  
talked;  
From all delights of mind and heart that  
lie  
Betwixt our kind Athenian soil and sky.

But ah, that hour, which far repaid all  
cost  
Of lesser loves, of gods and country lost,  
When on a dream-starred night that great  
Queen leant  
Her cheek to mine, and all our spirits  
blent  
In one long wonder-glance, one earth-  
eclipse  
Of touching hands, of meeting eyes and  
lips!

•        •        •        •        •  
A time for all things—with unfluttered  
breath

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The flame-bright lips proclaimed—"His  
sentence—Death!"

While wild, reverberate echoes of her  
word

The brazen rafters of the palace stirred,  
And hail-swift down on sense and sound  
and sight

The smiting shields descended through the  
night.

Bright love, delight and death—for this I  
came

To that far land: for this a little flame  
Smaller than any star on night's pale edge,  
My soul, a white moth flits by sand and  
sedge;

Flits evermore, till in the ceaseless whir  
Of Time's great wings it win again to her.



## A Song of Cormac Conloingias

### I

#### THE PLANTING OF THE TREE

“THAT something shall remain to tell  
Of all the joy that once was ours,  
Of all our high and dream-filled hours  
Ere ever Death upon us fell.  
For sight, for sign, for memory  
Of all that made our love divine,  
Lo, here,” she said, “O Cormac mine,  
I plant this day a little tree.”

“For that first day when here you came,  
For that first hour when in our eyes  
Shone forth in mutual, swift surprise  
Our spirits’ new-enkindled flame.  
For that long wonder-night when I,  
Our love’s first consecrating kiss  
Yet on my mouth, in sleepless bliss  
Watched till the morn flamed down the  
sky.”

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

"This little tree—to moon and star,  
Through all the star-filled nights of June,  
Its leaves shall sing a magic rune  
To woo us from the shades afar.  
The sea-bound winds shall list the tale,  
And to the utmost isles of earth  
Shall bear it on, till midst their mirth  
Kings at its hearing shall grow pale."

"For you, O Cormac, son of kings —  
Fire in your veins and on your lips—  
Already lowers Death's eclipse,  
Your dirge the white Shee-maiden sings.  
Though diamond-bright is Emain's  
    throne,  
And many roads to Emain lead,  
And you are last of Connor's seed,  
You ride a darker road alone."

"For I, whose love a net of Death  
Was round about your spirit cast,  
Behold, even now, I hold you fast  
By spell of eyes and hands and breath.  
My treasure plucked from out the core  
Of life at its resplendent prime,

## SONG OF CORMAC CONLOINGIAS

My love, whom Death, the lord of Time,  
Shall seal mine own forevermore."

"Yea, mine past hap of mortal change,  
Past other loves to come between,  
Past lure of goddess or of queen,  
Past beauty's waning to estrange.  
Though all our life's high holiday  
Draw to a twilight grey and chill,  
Though gift of years were mine to will,  
I would not, dare not, bid you stay."

## II

### THE CRIMSON FRUITAGE

Out of the West the King's son came,  
Through flame of the dying day rode he,  
And where the rowans lean to the South,  
Deep in the garden of my mouth  
He planted flowering kisses three.

He said that he would come again,  
He plucked the rowan berries red,  
He fashioned them into a crown,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And from his fair height stooping down,  
He bound and wound them round my  
head.

And swift and sweet across my eyes  
The life-touch of his lips flashed then:  
"And thus," he said, "O heart's delight,  
I lay me on your breath and sight,  
To keep until I come again."

And now the rowan boughs are brown,  
But red the roads from Connacht are,  
And they have raised his Ogham stone  
O'er Cormac where he sleeps alone,  
From Emain of the Kings afar.

## Ængus Og and the Swan-Maiden

ROSE-RED o'er the glimmering marshes,  
Rose-red o'er the darkling lake,  
Lo! the face of the Dawn outflashes  
From the faery Moon's grey wake,  
And I through the reeds elve-haunted,  
The road to my true love take.

Rose-white is the breast of my true love—  
Yea, whiter than drifting snow;  
And for her are the dim reeds singing  
A murmurous sleep-song low,  
As yonder beneath their shadows  
Dreaming her white wings go.

Rose of the Dawn, 'mid the lilies,  
Her flower-fair way she keeps,  
How from that dream shall I rouse her,  
How for the spirit that sleeps,  
Give her the soul of a woman,  
A woman that laughs and weeps.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Rose of the World! from thy dreaming  
I bid thee awake! Arise!  
From the floor of the shimmering waters,  
From the roof of the open skies,  
Come with the love-light gleaming  
In thy heart, thy lips, thine eyes!

Rose of my life, and its crowning!  
Flower of the Dream and the Dawn,  
Now is my long quest over,  
Now is the grim Night gone,  
Yonder the sun exultant  
Rises and beckons us on!

To Your Palace of Golden Dreams,  
O Ængus!

To your palace of golden dreams, O  
Ængus!

Lo, to rekindle a dream one goes,  
To your garden of golden dreams, O  
Ængus!

One to garner the Deathless Rose.

And the sun and the moon and the stars,  
O Ængus!

And twilight and night and the rose-red  
dawn

And the singing waves of the sea, O  
Ængus!

Are wooing and luring my footsteps on.

And the song you sang to Etain, O Ængus,

And the song the swan-maid sang to you

And the singing waves of the sea, O  
Ængus!

Are wafting my spirit back to Brugh.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

To Brugh where lingers the Love that dies  
not,

To Brugh where yet of the years un-  
dimmed,

Bright as the stars of Earth's first morn-  
ing,

Dwells the Beauty of poets hymned.

And one with the rising day, O Ængus,

Shall come to you, call to you, sleeping  
there,

And you from the shrouding clay, O  
Ængus!

Shall rise flame-bright to your poet's  
prayer.



## One Goes to Brugh

HERE, where silence like a prayer,  
    Binds the spirit in its spell,  
Here where peerless, shining, fair,  
    Thou, O Ængus, once didst dwell!

Here, where guided by the gleam  
    Of no earth-seen sun or star,  
I the Dreamer of a Dream,  
    Come to thee from fields afar.

Here, where ranged like wizards hoar,  
    Brooding through the tranced day,  
On the rites they knew of yore,  
    Rise the Druid-altars grey.

Here to grace thy poet's sighs,  
    Here to gladden soul and sight,  
Wilt thou not awake and rise,  
    Crowned and plumed and wreathed  
    with light?

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Girt about with singing flame,  
Through whose radiance one may see  
Gold-bright birds that hymn thy name  
In a dreaming ecstasy.

Swifter than a poet's thought  
Borne upon the wings of Morn,  
Rise, with love and rapture fraught  
To all men of women born!

## The Coming of Lugh

DECTERA SINGS

AWAKE, my soul! Awake, and sing!  
Across the foam's white blossoming  
Comes now thy lover and thy king.

The cuckoo calls the drowsing May,  
Behind the whitethorn's latticed spray  
The blackbird pipes his heart away.

A magic laughter floods and fills  
The song of Spring-awakened rills,  
And unseen harpers walk the hills.

Along the mountains' purple ledge  
The Shée arise from fern and sedge  
To dance upon the daylight's edge.

Through all green life that buds and blows,  
And with glad Summer's prescience glows,  
A rout of Danaan laughter goes.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And I, the mortal girl who won  
Thy love, O brightest-shining one,  
Await thee here, my life, my Sun!

## Dectera's Cradle-Song to Cuchulain

It was great Lugh himself from heaven,  
Came down to be my lord, my love,  
To me his plighted faith was given,  
And this, the flower and fruit thereof.

Then sing, my soul, thy lord the sun,  
Sing for the little life begun;  
Sing for the crown thy land hath won  
To light her brows forever.

My little son! whose shining way  
Shall lie across the risen day;  
Thee Fear shall touch not, nor dismay,  
Nor blight of mortal sorrow.

A laughter on the edge of swords,  
A war-song chaunted at the fords,  
A death-bolt launched 'mid hostile hordes,  
O child who shall withstand thee?

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

A torch to guide the eyes of men  
Past deeps of quicksand and of fen,  
Beyond where even thy mother's ken  
    May follow, lo, thy way lies!

Far, far beyond the furthest flight  
Of song or star, thy fame's fair flight,  
As, son of Light, towards the light  
    Thou goest forever.

## Song of Emer

IN the red of the windy Dawn,  
Through the honey-sweet, dew-bright  
clover,

Over mount, over mead, over lawn  
He is coming, my lord, my lover!

From the heart of the utmost Night  
Where nor elf-flame nor star-flame  
lightens,

Lo, he holds to my heart his flight,  
Lo, he comes with a brow that bright-  
ens!

There is laughter upon his mouth  
For the rapturous mirth of living,  
For the lips that shall slake its drouth  
And sing to the gods for the giving.

There is laughter for battles won,  
There is laughter for Right defended,  
There is laughter for Justice done,  
In the blue eye falcon-splendid.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Where the red of his chariot gleams  
    There are songs on the lips of women,  
There is praise on the tongue of Queens,  
    There is Fear on the face of foemen.

And bright as his sun-bright sword  
    When it leaps to the foeman's slaying,  
Is the light on the head of my lord,  
    Is the light on his gold hair playing.

And when in the unseen days  
    The poets their praises chaunting,  
Shall utter Cuchulain's praise,  
    Shall sing of his valor vaunting:

Me too, his beloved, they shall sing,  
    No praise to my name refusing,  
The Queen of their soul's dead King,  
    The bride of his heart's first choosing.



## A Ballad of Dead Queens

[EMER]

IN all the twilight realm of dreams, I wis,  
There walks no Queen so high-hearted as  
    this,  
Who, gazing on her King and Sweetheart  
    dead,  
Sped forth her soul to his in one last  
    kiss.

Other great Queens in that dim purple  
    space  
There dwell, of whose bright loveliness  
    and grace  
Poets have sung, until some trait of theirs  
Each lover sees in his own lady's face.

The shining Daughter of the Swan, and  
    she  
Who once with Tristram on a summer sea  
Under the witch-light of a waning moon  
Drank deep the chalice of their destiny.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Pale Guinevere, her eyes yet heavy-fraught  
With dreams of two who rode to Camelot,  
And mouth that still, for all the dead,  
    dumb years  
Is dewy with the breath of Lancelot.

But on her heart the Rose Inviolatè  
Of love triumphant over Death and Fate,  
Of Love that perished on the lips that fed,  
Queen Emer holds unchanged her royal  
    state.

## Death of Cuchulain

SILENT are the singers in the purple halls  
of Emain,

Silent all the harp-strings untouched of  
any hand,

Wan as twilight-roses the radiant, royal  
women,

Black upon the hearthstone the erst-  
while flaming brand.

Inward far from ocean the storm's white  
birds are flying,

Darting, like dim wraith-flames across  
the falling night,

Winds like a *caoine* through the quicken-  
groves are sighing,

On no lip is laughter, in no heart de-  
light.

For thitherwards witch-wafted athwart  
the sundering spaces,

Lo, a word doom-freighted unto Con-  
chubar has come,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Whispering of one who in far-off, hostile  
places  
Strikes a last defending blow for king  
and home.

And the King pacing lone in his place of  
High Decision,  
Gazing with wrapt eyes on that far-  
flung battle-plain,  
Through the red rains rising beholds with  
startled vision  
Sight such as man's eye shall not see  
again.

For one there is dying, of his foes at last  
outnumbered,  
One whose soul a sword was, shaped  
by God's own hand,  
One who guarded Ulaidh when all her  
knight-hood slumbered,  
Prone beneath the curse laid of old upon  
the land.

And dying so, alone, of all mortal aid  
forsaken,

## DEATH OF CUCHULAIN

Dead his peerless war-steeds, dead his  
    charioteer,  
Yet the high splendor of his spirit all un-  
    shaken,  
Shines morning-bright through the  
    Death-mists drawing near.

And radiant round his brow yet the hero-  
    flame is gleaming,  
And firm yet his footstep upon the red-  
    dened sod,  
As with sword uplifted towards the day's  
    last beaming,  
Forth goes the spirit of Cuchulain unto  
    God.

Leaving to his land and the Celtic race  
    forever  
That which shall not fail them through-  
    out the fading years,  
Heritage of faith unchanged, of fear-  
    undimmed endeavor,  
And a quenchless laughter ringing down  
    the edge of hostile spears.

## The Coming of Finn

"THE Norsemen's ships are in the Bay,  
To-morrow ere the throstle calls  
Good-morning to the risen day,  
The wizard comes to fire my walls."

"The gods are of inconstant mind,  
And of their ancient faith forswore,  
The sun, the moon, the stars, the wind,  
I pray to them, but pray no more."

So spake King Cormac to his lords,  
In Erin's ancient council-place,  
A freighted silence drank his words,  
And no man looked him in the face.

But at the outer portal came  
The answer to a challenge flung,  
An age-grey Druid spoke the name  
Of Cumhal, long of poets sung.

## THE COMING OF FINN

And with that saying one strode in,  
Of height so great, of mien so fair,  
The high gods might have deemed him kin,  
Nor less he seemed to any there.

“And what strange word is this I hear?”  
He said, “that strikes your laughter  
still,  
That through the Dawn a Shape of Fear  
Walks unassailed on Tara’s Hill?”

“That, kindled by his baleful hands,  
The flames shall flash on Tara’s height,  
And Tara’s self be but a brand  
Flung red against the morn’s pale  
light!”

“And, for this Shape derives its birth  
From spirits to our land malign,  
Shall it be whispered round the earth  
That Erin’s valor grows supine?”

“Nay, never so; against all odds  
Of Hate, of Treachery, of Force,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Of jealous men or hostile gods  
Must Erin's knighthood hold its  
course."

"And I, unto her service vowed,  
Ere ever yet the morrow's born,  
Myself shall seek this wizard proud,  
And smite him hence to shame and  
scorn!"

So spoke great Finn, his task begun,  
So, Fear-destroying down the day  
Flamed Erin's young, imperial Sun  
Of Truth and Faith and Chivalry.



## Goddess and Poet

WITH Love-sandalled feet o'er-stepping  
Night's ensabled bars,  
With thy maiden train descending  
Down a stair of stars:  
Far beyond the utmost splendor  
Of Desire or dream,  
Thou upon thy poet's vision,  
Goddess, soon shall't gleam!

Each man's vision to his fancy—  
Mine was one of flame,  
Wandering here 'mid Beltane fires  
Oft I called thy name;  
Called as mortal to immortal,  
Answer hoping none,  
Save the mirthless voice of Echo  
Down the hillsides blown.

But the stars sang all together,  
As the wondering Night  
Held ajar her purple portals  
For thine earthward flight:

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Flashed the swift, auroral radiance  
Straightway from the skies,  
Flooding with its white effulgence  
Heart and lips and eyes.

Rose of that supernal whiteness,  
First to mortal view  
Then revealed, thou stood'st before me  
Goddess, maiden too.  
Flower of all Night's star-bright meadows,  
Lo, thou shonest there,  
Of thine own high will responding  
To thy poet's prayer.

Now old days and ways forgotten,  
Fires of hearth and home,  
Face of waiting sire and sister,  
'Mid the hills I roam.  
Poet blest of all earth's poets,  
Whose poor song to crown,  
From the furthest heights of heaven  
Came a goddess down.

## A Ballad of Queen Etain

A YOUNG HARPER SINGS

THOUGH you should walk a thousand  
years

Along the singing roads that run  
Beneath the green seas, or should go  
Through all the valleys of the sun;  
Though you should climb the starry stairs

Upon whose utmost purple height  
Girt round about with song and fire,

Rose-red desire and hearts-delight,  
Sits Dana, queen of gods and men,

Great mother of the Danaan race,  
Whose eyes eternal torches are

Of awe, of rapture and of grace;  
Whose lips are founts whereto shall come,  
Their souls athirst for love and fame;

Earth's pilgrim-poets, thence to take  
New flame and re-awakened flame:

Or should you racing with the Moon,  
Her flying, foam-white feet outspeed,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And o'er the hedges of the Night  
Take flight upon a magic steed,  
Not in the meadows of the stars,  
Nor by the streams that wind their way  
From where the twilight kisses night,  
To where the dawn is one with day.  
Nor, though by scented billows borne,  
Your feet should reach those far-flung  
Isles,  
Whence Fand from great Manannan fled  
To seek her earth-born lover's smiles;  
Nor there, nor there, nor anywhere,  
In wonder-fields of earth or sky,  
Shall shine upon your eyes a Queen  
Clothed in a loveliness so high,  
As she in singing whose bright grace  
Gods snatch from men the glad refrain,  
Until its fragrance fills the ways  
Of earth and heaven — "Etain!"  
"Etain!"

He strikes his harp with languid hands,  
That younger minstrel chaunting there,  
For his eyes' desire is caught in the  
strands

## A BALLAD OF QUEEN ETAIN

Of the Queen's bright hair.

And his soul's desire from his lips has  
    flown,

To bathe in the blue lake of her eyes,

While his song, a rose-leaf passion-blown,  
Upon his wan lip dies.

## The Spirits Mourn for Ængus

O ÆNGUS! lord forever dear,  
To thee we cry, to thee we call,  
Time strikes us with his leaden spear,  
The heavy hours upon us fall—  
Hear us, O master, hear!

By what bright seas thy footsteps go,  
What lands are gladdened by thy grace,  
We know not, this we only know—  
We die for hunger of thy face.  
Hear us, O master, hear!

The fires are dim upon thy fanes,  
Here, even here, in golden Brugh,  
No song, no sign, no word remains,  
To speak the splendor that it knew.  
Hear us, O master, hear!

We pass, we fade, the shadows creep  
Upon us, drink our beauty up,

## SPIRITS MOURN FOR ÆNGUS

God pours us on the lips of Sleep,  
And flings away the empty cup.  
We die! we die! we die!





## II

### A HOSTING OF HEROES



## A Hosting of Heroes

LORD God to Thee, a song of praise  
For these, Thy paladins, we raise;  
Each name of whom a flag unfurled  
Athwart the ramparts of the world  
Remains a living word and sign  
Of all that made or makes divine  
The race wherefrom they drew their  
    breath,  
The land they loved and served till death.

From him who 'midst his foes alone,  
Self-bound unto the Pillar-stone,\*  
To Doom's grey face and darkling skies  
Turned yet unconquered, sun-glad eyes,  
To him, that later chief,† whose name  
Gleams yet a torch of unquenched flame,  
A beacon flung against the dark,  
To light our feet to Freedom's ark.

For all who kept their sword-bright trust,  
Their sword-bright faith undimmed of  
    rust;

\*Cuchulain

†Parnell

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

From whose dead lips unto our own  
The sacred word of Duty borne,  
Shall yet from Night uplift our land,  
And work the glory that they planned—  
For those we praise, for these we laud  
Thy everlasting name, Lord God.

## The Dream of Ængus Og

WHEN the rose o' Morn through the  
Dawn was breaking,  
And white on the hearth was last night's  
flame,  
Thither to me 'twixt sleeping and waking,  
Singing out of the mists she came.

And grey as the mists on the spectre  
meadows  
Were the eyes that on my eyes she laid,  
And her hair's red splendor through the  
shadows  
Like to the marsh-fire gleamed and  
played.

And she sang of the wondrous far-off  
places  
That a man may only see in dreams,  
The death-still, odorous, starlit spaces  
Where Time is lost and no life gleams.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And there till the day had its crest up-  
lifted,

She stood with her still face bent on me,  
Then forth with the Dawn departing  
drifted

Light as a foam-fleck on the sea.

And now my heart is the heart of a  
swallow

That here no solace of rest may find,  
For evermore I follow and follow  
Her white feet glancing down the wind.

And forevermore in my ears are ringing—  
(Oh! red lips yet shall I kiss you  
dumb!)

Twain sole words of that May morn's  
singing,  
Calling to me "Hither!" and "Come!"

From flower-bright fields to the wild lake-  
sedges

Crying my steps when the Day has gone,

## THE DREAM OF ÆNGUS OG

Till dim and small down the Night's pale  
edges

The stars have fluttered one by one.

And light as the thought of a love for-  
gotten

The hours skim past, while before me  
flies

That face of the Sun and Mist begotten,  
Its singing lips and death-cold eyes.

## Flight of Diarmuid and Grainné

LAUGHING she came to him, swift-footed,  
sweet,  
Laid the command of her eyes on his  
eyes,  
Captured the soul of him ardent and fleet,  
Whispered him, "Diarmuid, my dearest,  
arise!"

"Yonder the dawn-light cleaves sheer  
through the dark,  
Morn rises early to gladden our way;  
Fleeing, our spirits shall soar with the  
lark,  
Herald to hymn us to life's fuller day."

"Ah, but my loyalty!"—"Ah, but my love,  
Is that a little thing, think you, O man?  
Higher it is than the high gods above—  
Mated we were ere Creation began!"



## DIARMUID AND GRAINNE

Then, "But the bride of my liege-lord thou  
art,

Grainné, my princess, and I am his  
friend."

"Nay, but I follow the law of my heart,  
That is thine only, and thine to the  
end."

Fire to the flame of her wooing he rose,  
And one last glance at great Fionn held  
fast,

Leashed in the chain of his spell-wrought  
repose,

Out of the doors of the palace they  
passed.

Stars lingered yet in the lap of the  
night,

Waiting their pleasure and wooing them  
on,

Yet for a moment they paused in their  
flight,

Hand touching hand in the sweet-  
scented dawn.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Lip pressed to lip in a virginal, new  
Rapture that sped like white fire down  
each vein,  
While in that Love's first communion they  
grew  
Wise as the gods are of bliss and of  
pain.

Silent as gods, when they quaff the divine  
Essence of life, save for one murmured  
word;  
"Bride of my soul who forever art mine!"  
"Thine past all parting, my love and  
my lord!"

Oh, for the grace of that journey begun!  
Night fled before them and red rose  
the Morn,  
Then with fair faces upraised to the Sun,  
Joyous they sang for the joy to them  
born.

Fearless and sweet rose their pæan of  
praise,  
Hymning the love that makes laughter  
of Death,

## DIARMUID AND GRAINNÉ

Nature, their mother, through all her  
green ways

Echoed their singing with rapturous  
breath.

Diarmuid and Grainné at the Forest  
of Dooris

SWEETER than any life beneath the sun,  
Or any dream of life the high gods deign  
To let upon men's sleeping eyelids shine,  
Was that for these at Dooris now begun.

For swift and strong and beautiful, their  
lips  
Unspoiled, insatiate, bent to kiss the cup  
Of perfect joy the cloudless days held up—  
The long sweet days of Light without  
eclipse.

For whether grey or gold the skies above,  
For them undimmed shone one imperial  
sun—  
And other light their glad eyes needed  
none—  
The flame immortal of their mortal love.

## DIARMUID AND GRAINNÉ

And Summer wrought for them a garden-  
close

High-hedged and all a-bloom with blossoms rare;

And sweeter all her roses for them were  
For that amongst them gleamed one  
Death-red Rose.

Yea, and for that a little way outside  
The scented hedgerows, clear-discerned,  
stood Fate,

Saying, "Behold a little while I wait  
The day that shall destroy them and  
divide!"

Thus fronting always, wheresoe'er they  
turned,

The Doom to be escaped not, nor denied,  
The splendor of the love that might have  
died

Of its own greatness ever brighter burned.

And if upon their raptured harmonies  
Of speech and glance, a pause, at times,  
would come,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

'Twas but because great pity smote them  
dumb  
For all their days that yet had been ere  
these.

So that fair Lord the shining of whose face  
Had lit their way from Tara through the  
Night,  
Love, the high Emperor of their delight,  
Filled all their days with gladness and  
with grace.

So armored in their own bright fearless-  
ness  
Against what hap of sorrow or surprise  
The hand of god or mortal might devise,  
Laughing they drained their leeless wine  
of bliss.

## Grainné Returns to Tara

So bright-faced Diarmuid slept where no  
to-morrow

Should rouse him with its bugle-call of  
Light

In that far land beyond the range of  
sorrow

Where mighty Ængus bore him through  
the night;

While she for whom no morn of mortal  
waking

Should bring again the radiance of his  
smile,

Watched by him through the long days  
unforsaking,

Deeming, perchance, that for a little  
while,

Might yet come true that word of Ængus'  
speaking,

That, by his Danaan wizardry restored,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Some shadow-semblance of himself displaying,  
Should live again her ever-worshipped lord:  
But as the long, bright days in still succession  
Passed, bringing no light to the dead man's face,  
So passed from out her life in cowed procession,  
All that had made its laughter, love and grace.

And in their stead came that—the last,  
best giving  
Of the strong gods—the god-like consciousness,  
That nevermore through all her years of living,  
Should any great pain, yea, or any bliss  
Reach to her soul, where on its high pedestal  
Of utmost rapture, utmost anguish, known,



## GRAINNE RETURNS TO TARA

It kept its state, inviolate and vestal,  
A white lamp burning by a tomb alone.

But when no more the soft, unchequered  
splendor

Of those long days at Brugh her soul  
might brook,

Nor any further hope the gods would lend  
her,

To Tara back her wistful way she took;  
The courtiers watching with the avid  
vision

Of those who see a dead dream vivified,  
Beholding in her eye that bright decision,  
And on her lip that red, unconquered  
pride.

Murmured of marvels all belief exceed-  
ing—

Of women's veering faith—dead men  
forgot—

Interpreting each by his own light reading  
Of Life, the change that Deathless  
Grief had wrought;

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The wondrous change—that sun-bright  
    Winter gleaming  
Of a great spirit unsubdued of Pain,  
That kept before men's eyes its royal  
    seeming,  
When long had vanished love's brief,  
    radiant reign.

But once—'twas in the singing April  
    weather—  
Came lilted to her on a vagrant  
    breeze  
A snatch of song that they had sung to-  
    gether  
In old, glad days beneath the quicken  
    trees;  
And then for all she was a High King's  
    daughter,  
Of whom no weakness any man might  
    tell,  
Down her pale cheeks the hot tears flowed  
    like water  
Of brooks released from Winter's icy  
    spell.

## GRAINNÉ RETURNS TO TARA

And "Diarmuid!" cried she twice and  
thrice, and falling

Rose-white amongst the lilies at her  
feet,

Her weeping maidens deemed that in that  
calling

Her soul had sped her waiting lord's to  
greet:

But no such sweet release to her was  
given,

Whose fate it was behind a quenchless  
pride

Through long, grey years to hide the spirit  
riven

Past mortal hope that day when Diar-  
muid died.

## Cuchulain

“Never will I break my vow, nor wrong  
my land, nor sell my chief.”

THOU, most strong and beautiful,     I  
Thou, most brave and dutiful,  
Thou, thy Ulster's shield and sword,  
Thou, her servant and her lord;  
Thou whose deeds athwart the years  
Flash, a burnished field of spears,  
Mighty Cuchulain!

Thou, whose name in splendor lone  
Rears itself a pillar-stone,  
Radiant through the rains and night,  
On thy land's grey, storied height,  
Thou who scatheless held thy faith  
To thy utmost, labored breath,  
Knightly Cuchulain!

Lo! it is to thee I raise  
Here, this testament of praise,

## CUCHULAIN

Chaunting with glad lips thy fame,  
Mouth of Truth and Soul of Flame;  
Light that shall not fade or fail,  
Sun-bright symbol of the Gael!  
Peerless Cuchulain!

## Cuchulain's Wooing

GREAT-LIMBED and swift and beautiful  
Past any dream, he came to her  
From Emain Macha through a land  
For gladness of the Spring astir.

And on the flutes of Morning blown,  
Strong Joy that took for breath no  
pause,  
The song of Breeze and Stream and Bird,  
The herald of his coming was.

Yea, and through all her April ways,  
To Erin's utmost sea-girt rim,  
Through waking seed, and blade and leaf,  
Green Nature laughed for joy of him.

And where he held his sun-bright course,  
Straight-spiced as arrow on its flight,  
Men thronged as to a pageant wrought  
By the high gods for their delight.

## CUCHULAIN'S WOOING

And seeing, with a fairer faith  
The Deathless Mighty Ones adored,  
Who thus unto their Ulster's need  
Had shaped at once a shield and sword.

So through the singing land he passed,  
The peerless warden of her fame,  
So lord himself of Love and War,  
Unto his fair-faced love he came.

## Emer's Girlhood

ROSE-BRIGHT where all were flower-fair,  
A rose around whose petals yet  
In order fresh and odorous  
The dreams of maidenhood were set.

The green of April at her feet,  
The joy of Springtime round her  
spread,  
The hope of Summer in her eyes,  
The gold of sunrise on her head.

So first upon the sight of him  
Who down from Ulster rode alone,  
To bring his heart's high love to her,  
In the sweet morning Emer shone.

No girl, but Spring herself stepped down  
Awhile upon that daisied plain,  
She sat, where bright the lilacs spread,  
Encompassed by her maiden train.



## EMER'S GIRLHOOD

With deft, swift skill of needlehood,  
Where Fancy led the flying hand,  
Inscribing on a silken scroll  
Some storied glory of her land.

Till, raising to his shining height  
Her veiled glance, the silken scroll  
Slipped down, and in her sea-blue eyes  
Shone forth her new-awakened soul.

And rising up, she placed in his  
Her gentle palm, and to him gave  
Whose heart was high for joy of her,  
Her maiden welcome sweet and grave.

## Cuchulain to the Poets

O POETS, when you sing of me,  
And of the deeds that I have done,  
And of the battles that I won,  
For Ulster fighting mightily;  
Praising me with high hearts of fire—  
I pray you also in your song  
Tell men how once the World's Desire  
Was mine to love a whole day long.

Yea, rose-fair face and mouth of flame—  
(O vision that no age shall dim!)  
At sunrise o'er the world's bright rim  
All golden-raimented she came;  
And leaning on the green hill there  
To me in fashion woman-wise,  
Through the dark twilight of her hair,  
I kissed her on the dew-cold eyes.

Aye, kissed until within their blue  
A mortal woman's spirit shone,

## CUCHULAIN TO THE POETS

Laughed back its answer to my own,  
And mine into its sweet self drew—  
Folding me there with an old rune  
Of kings enwrapped in magic rest,  
Till life seemed all a drowsy noon,  
To be dreamed out upon her breast.

Her white dove's breast—O men of songs!  
This were a tale which rightly sung,  
Would make old men grow glad and  
young—

Would make old foes forget their wrongs;  
For since this joyous world begun,  
Was never sure such love as this  
By mortal man from woman won—  
So fair a dream, so brimmed with bliss.

For with the setting sun she passed—  
Swift flame to flame—her rose-bright face  
Still with that new-won human grace  
 wooing my own unto the last;  
Bidding my heart to singing cheer  
For joy that on that hillside lone,  
Love visible, divine and dear,  
Had been through one long day its own.

## An Earth Spirit

A FLAME that dances down the wind,  
A swallow-wing against the sky,  
An autumn leaf to brush your cheek,  
And whirl away, no more am I.

Friends fall, dreams fade, the gods are  
dead.

My daylight suffers no eclipse—  
Across eternal abysms  
I kiss to Fate my finger-tips.

For one am I in brain and heart  
And breath with her who gave me breath,  
Who keeps her green way singingly  
Athwart the cairns where slumbereth

Alike high Valor and fair Love;  
Where dust the mouth of Deirdre is,  
And on the lips of Cuchulain  
Forgotten all is Emer's kiss.

## The Magic Isles of Manannan

FAIR past furthest reach of mortal dream-  
ing,

Swung beyond the sunset's utmost span,  
Golden through the purple twilight's  
gleaming,

Lie the magic Isles of Manannan.

There, beneath green boughs where fruit  
and flower

Bloom together through the cloudless  
year,

There, with deathless rapture for their  
dower,

Their bright spirits all undimmed of  
Fear.

Pace in paired delight, the fond, immor-  
tal

Shades whom Honor here love's goal  
denied,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Queens who would not step o'er Duty's  
portal,  
Lords who held unstained their plumes'  
high pride.

Thither sailing through the pearl-pale  
splendor  
Of a May moon with dream-sails un-  
furled,  
Shall I find thee, O my Queen most ten-  
der,  
Heart's Desire and White Rose of the  
World.

Yea, and finding, wilt thou bend to listen  
Lily-wise—(O unforgotten grace!)  
Will thy grey eyes into azure glisten,  
And the rose-light gladden all thy face?

As at last the Hidden Word is spoken,  
As at length the flame-writ script's un-  
rolled,  
As for aye the wizard spell is broken  
Laid upon our lips in Eireann old.

## MAGIC ISLES OF MANANNAN

So I dare to dream, the dull years cheating,  
Holding yet our golden vision true,

So O love o' mine this word of greeting  
O'er the Fairy Seas I waft to you.

## The Last of the Fianna

"They lay down 'on the side of the hill  
at Teamhair and put their lips to the earth,  
and died." (*Gods and Fighting Men*)

To the dewy earth they turned their faces,  
Sweet, green mother of their old de-  
light;

They for whom in Erin no more place  
was—

They, the once strong bulwarks of her  
might;

Scarce a good man's stone-throw from  
where Tara

Reared its shining splendor on the  
height.

Golden-shod the hours in that fair palace  
Danced like maidens to a festal song,  
But for them who drained life's bitter  
chalice



## THE LAST OF THE FIANNA

There upon the hill, the day was long:  
Till sweet Death came down in the grey  
twilight,  
Death, whose kind kiss heals all human wrong.

Kissing now their lids of drowsing vision  
With a dream of Life as it had been,  
Glowing with the joy of swift decision,  
Radiant with the flash of sword-blades  
keen,  
Ringing with the songs of Nature's spring-  
time,  
Crowned with love of goddess and of  
queen.

Calling to them through the trooping  
shadows,  
Beautiful, undimmed of age or fear,  
Those who with them through the golden  
meadows  
In their morn of manhood cloudless-  
clear,  
Long ago behind great Finn the peerless,  
Rode to chase of foeman or of deer.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

So Night set her seal upon their dreaming  
Of brave days and deeds forever gone,  
So they passed, the men of god-like seem-  
ing,

With their faces set towards the Dawn.  
They whose like in all her future story,  
Nevermore the earth should look upon.

## Of One Who Died in Murias

WHEN for a doom and punishment  
God took the green tides of the sea,  
And launched them from His hand on  
thee,  
And all thy pride was from thee rent.

Nor all thy roofs of beaten gold,  
Nor all thy walls of chrysolite  
Might save thee from the rushing Night  
Which down upon thy splendor rolled.

O Murias! with thee to death  
Went one whose face was fairer far  
Than is in June the vesper star  
Seen from the moon an arrow's breadth.

Went one who of all ladies dead  
Wast sure most fond and flower-fair,  
A spirit wrought of sun and air,  
And all on dreams and laughter fed.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

O Dreams! O Laughter! vain to stay  
The rushing Death, the green Eclipse  
Which surged between our meeting lips,  
Which bore thee on its tides away.

White foam! pale sea-drift! at the will  
Of the cold moon forever tossed—  
Thy beauty but an old tune lost—  
And yet one heart remembers still.

Yea, though no harper shall uplift  
In song for evermore thy name,  
And I am but a wandering flame  
Upon the world's grey winds adrift.

Undimmed through all the years I hold,  
Whence no god's finger may efface—  
O Queen! the shining of thy face  
Beneath its coronal of gold.

## The Sleeping Knight

“And the spirit of Eireann kissed the  
Sleeper’s lips.”

BUT One came past, a spirit of white  
flame,

Who stooped and kissed him on the lips  
and eyes,

And whispered in his ear, “Arise!  
Arise!

God’s heralds to the tourney call thy  
name.”

Then dream-swift down the morning  
winds she sped,

Who had for evermore destroyed his  
dreams,

And with a murmured song of waking  
streams,

Him through dim ways and dewless meads  
she led.

Till suddenly, where rose a purple height  
Of sunlit hills between them and the skies,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

A smiting splendor shone upon his eyes  
Of bannered hosts arrayed in armored  
night.

And when his glance through dazzlement  
might scan  
The helmèd features of that shining  
throng,  
Beneath the flags of causes perished long,  
He saw the face of many a ruined man.

Yea, side by side in order debonair,  
The dead, lost soldiers with the living men  
Who strive with proven steel of sword or  
pen  
For fairer Justice in a world unfair.

“God’s mail-clad knights!” she said, “Be-  
hold your place!  
And here for slakement of your long  
road’s drouth,  
Again I kiss you on the eyes and mouth,  
Who may bestow on you no further  
grace.”

## THE SLEEPING KNIGHT

And so was gone, a mist-wreath in the  
sun,  
No more nor less, but he in that fair host,  
Who reckon well all things for Freedom  
lost,  
His day of life-long service had begun.

## Dreaming of Cities Dead

DREAMING of cities dead,  
Of bright Queens vanishèd,  
Of kings whose names were but as seed  
    wind-blown  
E'en when white Patrick's voice shook  
    Tara's throne,  
My way along the great world-street I  
    tread,  
And keep the rites of Beauty lost, alone.

Cairns level with the dust—  
Names dim with Time's dull rust—  
Afar they sleep on many a wind-swept  
    hill,  
The beautiful, the strong of heart and  
    will—  
On whose pale dreams no sunrise joy shall  
    burst,  
No harper's song shall pierce with battle-  
    thrill.



## DREAMING OF CITIES DEAD

Long from their purpled heights,  
Their reign of high delights,  
The Queens have wended down Death's  
    mildewed stair,  
Leaving a scent of lilies on the air,  
To gladden Earth through all her days  
    and nights,  
That once she cherished anything so fair.

## The Singers to Their Lady

Lo! our Lady, we crave thy grace,  
If, for a little space between  
Grey of the Dawning, Red of the Morn-  
ing,

Yet of beauty and love we dream.  
Soon in splendor of Freedom's waking,  
Mountain and vale of thine shall gleam,  
Then with a glory of swords upflashing  
Shall we hail and proclaim thee Queen!

## An Irish Enchantment

THERE'S a ripple and shower of song-  
drops shaken,

A brown wing whirrs through the white-  
thorn spray—

O soul of mine from your dream awaken!  
Sweet, green Erin is far away.

Here is no highway of singing thrushes—

Onward with thunderous roar and din,  
The great life-stream of the city rushes,  
Avid to draw me in.

Yet over it all, the wild, faint laughter

Of grasses astir beneath the moon,  
Cries, "Come!" "Come!" "Come!" and

I follow after  
The whispering, elfin tune.

And my feet are winged with a blind de-  
sire

For brackened hills where the star-  
beams rest,

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And dead as the ash of a last year's fire  
Is the spirit within my breast.

Is it not time to cease your dreaming,  
Lost and wandering heart o' me say?  
O fairy eyes through the thickets gleam-  
ing,  
You've stolen my soul away!

## O Radiant Faith of Ireland

O RADIANT Faith of Ireland! Thou light  
of many lands;  
Thou flame that goest our feet before,  
thou torch within our hands.  
Thou golden span across the gulf of sun-  
dering ages cast,  
Thou glory shining yet undimmed from  
out our splendid past.

On thee as on a bulwark strong of old  
our sires leant,  
Through thee has Ireland's sun-bright soul  
to all earth's peoples sent  
Her word of an Imperial Hope—of  
Truth, serene, divine,  
Of Heaven-born Joy all unobscured by  
chance or change or time.

Thou fortress reared by Patrick's hand,  
that o'er the ravening flood  
Of hostile laws, of despot rage, still storm-  
unwreckt hast stood;

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

From whose bright portals down the years  
true heralds of the Dawn,  
From East to West, their Lord to preach,  
the Irish priests have gone.

Yea, priest and poet, saint and sage, and  
whoso yet would trace  
The roadways trodden of their feet along  
the world's wide face,  
Shall find it by fair towns that lift brave  
spires into the air,  
Shall find it by the shrines they raised—  
their Death-unsilenced prayer.

And one with us in name and fame, in life  
and death thou art,  
Life of our life, soul of our soul, heart of  
our inmost heart:  
Alike in gladness as in woe, in triumph as  
in loss,  
Our Ireland on her bosom wears the sym-  
bol of the Cross.

Her children throng the waterways where  
pass the mighty ships,

## O RADIANT FAITH OF IRELAND

Still pioneers of God they come, a prayer  
    upon their lips;  
Still bearing to their lineage true, Faith's  
    fertilizing rain,  
To blossom forth in stranger lands in  
    many a shining fane.

And blest and proud forever be the word  
    that o'er the earth  
Joins "Irish" and "Catholic" in one in-  
    stinctive breath;  
That said, perchance not all in praise, be-  
    comes our two-edged blade,  
Wherewith to win in Truth's defense,  
    God's knightly accolade.





## Legendary and Mythological Index

AENGUS OG (*Angus Og*).—Literally “Young Aengus,” the Gaelic god of love and beauty and immortal youth, whose fairy towers rose at Brugh-na-Boinne. Of him it was said that his kisses as they fell from his lips became singing birds. One of the many beautiful legends associated with him is that of the maiden, who for the space of a twelvemonth, appeared to him at the same hour every night, never speaking, only singing to a little golden harp which she carried in her hands. At the end of that time she disappeared, and Aengus began a tireless search for her throughout Ireland. He finally discovered her, leading an enchanted existence as a swan on the waters of a certain lake. He called her by her name (Caer), she responded, and in the morning, he also having assumed the form of a swan, they flew off together to his palace at Brugh, their singing filling with delight the whole country through which they passed.

AÍNE (*Aí-ne*).—Goddess of love and fire. The poem “Goddess and Poet,” commemorates a strange, Tannhauser-like legend, which represents Aíne in the Christian Ireland of the thirteenth

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

century, responding to the wooing of Thomas, the Wizard Earl of Desmond.

BRUGH.—The dwelling-place of Aengus in the Boyne Valley. (This Valley, so rich in legendary and historic lore, is within a two hours' journey from Dublin.)

CONCHUBAR (*Cón-ov-ar*).—Known also as Connor MacNessa, High King of Ulster about the beginning of the Christian era, founder of the chivalric order of the Red Branch Knighthood, and opponent of Queen Maeve of Connacht in her long wars upon Ulster.

CORMAC CONLOINGIAS.—The warrior-son of Conchubar, said to have come to tragic death through his love for Sceanba, who was also beloved of Craftaine the Harper. They met for the last time at Ath-luin on the Shannon, and there she planted a "little tree and called it Death."

CUCHULAIN (*Coo-hoo-lin*).—The supreme type of Celtic chivalry, the champion of Ulster in the protracted wars waged by Maeve and Conchubar. The pillar-stone at which he died is still pointed out near Dundalk, Co. Louth.

DECTERA.—Sister of Conchubar, mother of Cuchulain. The latter was the son of Sualtim, but popular story represented Dectera as having been beloved and espoused by Lugh the great sun-god of all the Celts.

## MYTHOLOGICAL INDEX

DE DANAAN (*Tuátha-de-Danaan*).—Possessors of Ireland at the time of the Milesian landing, and conquered by the latter, this magic, mystic race exercised their wizard powers by making for themselves homes in forest, stream and mountain. They were the heroic forerunners of the diminutive modern Irish fairy.

DIARMUID AND GRAÍNNE (*Dermid and Grainvā*).—King Cormac MacArt gave a banquet at Tara, to celebrate the betrothal of his beautiful daughter, Grainne to Fionn MacCumhail (Finn McCool). But Grainne, noting among Finn's followers, the noble and handsome Diarmuid O'Dyna, at once loved him. Administering to Finn and such others at the banquet as were likely to oppose her will, a sleeping-portion, she besought Diarmuid to go forth with her. This he at first refused, but finally yielded. Then, for a space they found refuge from the anger of Finn in the Forest of Dooris. Time, however, apparently healed Finn's wrath, and it was many years afterwards when Diarmuid died, killed by a wild-boar of magic origin. Then Aengus, who had fostered Diarmuid, bore the dead man's body back to Brugh, promising to restore it to a semblance of life. Several versions are given of Grainne's subsequent action, but the writer has here chosen the kindlier one.

DEIRDRE.—Of Deirdre, a child of great beauty, it was prophesied at her birth, she would be the cause of great disasters. To save her from this destiny, King Conchubar had her reared in extreme solitude, with the intention of making

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

her his Queen. She, however, meeting in early girlhood, Naoise (Nay-sha), a distinguished warrior of the Red Branch Knighthood, wed, and fled with him, and his two brothers, Ardan and Ainle to Scotland. Thence, at the end of seven years they returned to Ireland, at the invitation of Conchubar. The invitation was but a death-trap to the three brothers. Versions as to Deirdre's ending vary, but all are highly tragic. In "Deirdre to her Women," the writer has chosen that form of the story, which tells that Deirdre, after the death of Naoise, lived as the bride of Conchubar for the space of a twelvemonth; and, at the end of that time, terminated her sorrows, by leaping from Conchubar's chariot, on a day when the King was driving it at its utmost speed. Many have found it difficult to reconcile this story of treachery and death with the otherwise very noble and lofty attributes of Conchubar's character.

EMAIN MACHA.—The palace of the Ulster Kings.

EMER.—The heroic and beautiful wife of Cuchulain. She died on beholding the slain body of her lord, and was buried in the one grave with him.

ETAIN.—The half-fairy wife of Eochy, High-King of Ireland. She was the object of a prolonged strife between the latter, and Midair, King of Fairyland, in which the mortal king was finally the victor. Irish legend is rich in descriptions of her beauty.

## MYTHOLOGICAL INDEX

FIANNA.—The great body of trained fighting-men commanded by Finn McCool.

FIONN.—Finn McCool, who organized the Fianna in the reign of King Cormac McArt, to protect Ireland, and who, to great gifts of valor and beauty, added that of poetry.

FINOVAR.—“Findabair of the Fair Eyelids,” the beautiful daughter of Queen Maeve of Connacht, to win whose hand in marriage, Ferdia, the boyhood friend of Cuchulain, fought with the latter, and was unwillingly slain by the Ulster champion. Held up as a sort of marriage trophy by her warrior-mother to the princes whom she sought to win to her standard, Findabair perished in the flower of her girlhood. The poem in the present volume was suggested by one of John P. Campbell’s pictures, as were also the two poems, “Saba comes to Finn,” and “The Coming of Finn.”

LUGH.—The supreme sun-god of the Celts.

MAEVE.—The great war-queen of Connacht, the untiring foe of Ulster, is described as a woman of commanding loveliness. While there is no legendary origin for a “Greek Lover of Maeve,” the romance is within the possibilities.

MANANNAN.—The Celtic god of Ocean, lord of the Isles of the Happy Dead, protector of Erin.

MURIAS.—One of the four magic cities from which the De Danaans are said to have originally come.

## SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

SABA.—Irish legend tells no more wistful story than that of this woodland maiden, who came for a little while to be the mortal bride of Finn McCool, and was later, through Druidical enchantment, transformed into the appearance of a fawn. From her union with Finn sprang Ossian, Ireland's first great poet.

ULAI DH.—Ulster.











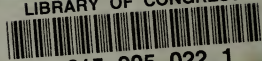
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